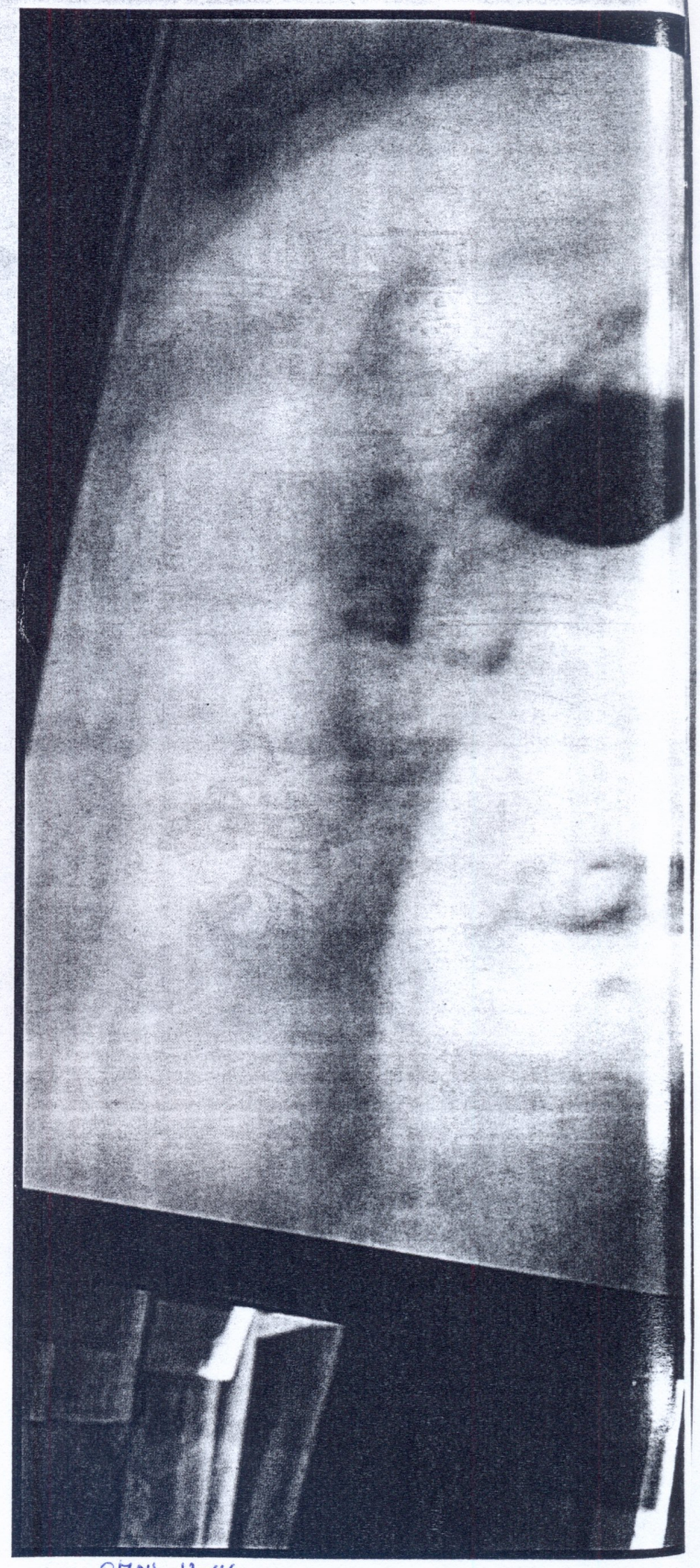
INTERVIEW

The man behind the face on Mars: How he thinks extraterrestrials and their architecture may have restructured the entire solar system

RICHARD HOAGLAND

Before Richard Hoagland spoke at the United Nations on February 27, 1992, a person stepped into the Dag Hammarskjöld Library Auditorium and asked: "Is a man from Mars speaking here?" I must confess similar questions ran through my mind before I first met Hoagland at *Omni*'s New York office. There's no getting around it: Hoagland has some unusual ideas about Mars. Monuments—a whole metropolis in fact—he believes, are linked to structures on Earth and the moon that, in turn, are tied together by an advanced new physics that may have spawned "hyperdimensional" space technologies the United States government may have gotten its hands on. Needless to say, these are ideas the mainstream scientific community wants no part of. That doesn't make Hoagland wrong, necessarily, but it definitely places him on the fringe.

At first blush, he certainly looks normal enough: a well-groomed, bearded man of 48 dressed in faultless business attire. Our conversation began on a normal note, too, with a discussion of parking strategies in Upper Manhattan and the challenges of finding coffee in offices on Friday afternoon. When we got around to the subject at hand—the alleged works described in his 420-page book, *The Monuments of Mars*—Hoagland stepped up to the "mike" like a seasoned pol in the midst of a long campaign. And it *has* been a long campaign. For 11 years he has crisscrossed the country, trying to get scientists to seriously consider the possibility that an advanced civilization has left calling cards of



PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT CLARK

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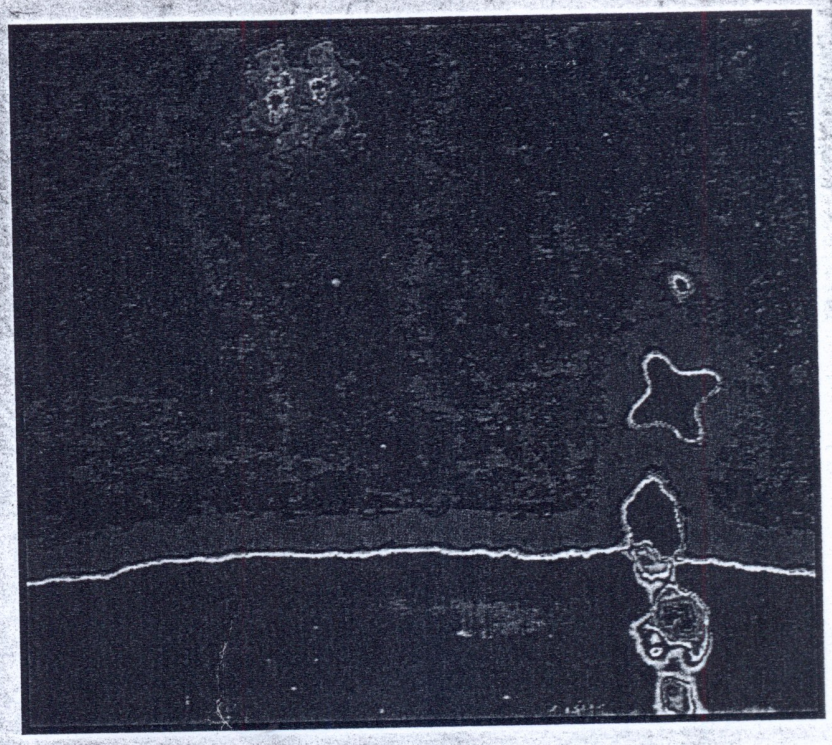
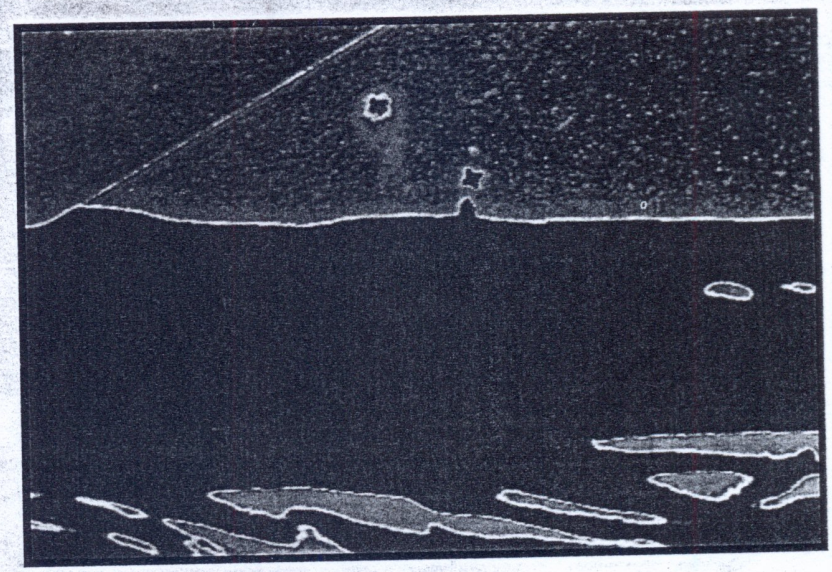


In this computer-enhanced, false-color close-up of frame III-84M, another remarkable object is seen just to the left of the Shard. Termed "the Cube," it appears to be a *seven-mile-high, one-mile-wide, geometric glasslike* structure composed of myriad "sub-cubes"—suspended in a darker, highly eroded, equally geometric matrix. The colors correspond to differing light intensities on the original *Lunar Orbiter* frame: yellow and red indicating the brightest, shading to green, blue, and magenta for the dimmest. Note the most intense light scattering (red/yellow) is coming from the highly geometric *interior* of the Cube (as opposed to its exterior surfaces). This is totally inconsistent with any geologic object, but is highly consistent with a degraded, *manufactured, semi-transparent, eroded glass structure.* The highly eroded condition of this anomalous feature, and its surrounding, darker structure, is thought to be due to prolonged meteor bombardment—indicating literally millions of years of exposure on the airless lunar surface.



This false-color, medium-angle shot of the distant lunar horizon in III-84M—viewed from the unmanned 1967 *Lunar Orbiter III,* orbiting 30 miles above the moon—reveals two striking lunar anomalies together: the Shard (right) and the Cube (left), extending vertically *miles* above the airless lunar surface. In this computer-enhanced view, the bright line slanting upward from the left is a photographic frame line of the original *Orbiter III* mosaic; note that the structures are *not* aligned with (or at right angles to) this prominent photographic feature, but are aligned with the local vertical—*toward the center of the moon.* Light intensities of the original film have been changed by the computer to corresponding colors, to bring out the fainter extension of a highly eroded structural "tower" connecting the Cube downward with the lunar surface seven miles below; surrounding this tower can be seen other hints of sparkling, fragmentary "structure"—indicating that these bright features are only the surviving remnants of a once far more complete, much larger, *intelligently manufactured structure* on the moon. Photographic experts, geologists, and manufacturing engineers with the Mars Mission have ruled out simple photographic defects or geologic features to explain these objects; increasing evidence (from other NASA missions) and expanding analysis indicates that these light-scattering features—in an *airless, cloudless* lunar vacuum—most likely represent actual surviving remnants of some type of ancient "lunar dome-like structure," possibly once covering much of *Sinus Medii*—perhaps constructed by visitors colonizing the moon with extremely advanced engineering technology millions of years ago. Return lunar missions will either confirm or deny this hypothesis.

lines—strikingly resembles the pattern of angles observed among pyramids in Egypt and Mexico, at Stonehenge, and even recent crop circles. How could this be? Hoagland suggests an answer: Extraterrestrials may have tinkered with our planet in ways we're just beginning to appreciate. His investigation, he's quick to point out, is wholly unrelated to the UFO abduction phenomenon. "Our work has nothing to do with things that go bump in the night or people claiming to be snatched from their beds."

No one denies that Hoagland has performed the most detailed analysis of Cydonia ever undertaken. If anything, critics say, the analysis is *too* detailed, given the data available. "Since the pictures are less than ideal, there is a tendency to overwork them and draw conclusions that may go beyond reason," says NASA Ames planetary scientist Chris McKay (*Omni* Interview, July 1992). "There's no doubt the thing looks like a face, but the conclusion that it was built by some civilization is a huge, huge leap."

Cornell astronomer Carl Sagan argues that given the human propensity for picking out faces amid random patterns, it's not surprising that somewhere on the 150 million-square-kilometer surface of Mars we might find something resembling a human face. To him, this feature is no more remarkable than a tortilla chip said to display the face of Jesus Christ, an eggplant supposedly resembling Richard Nixon, or a radar image of Venus containing the visage of Joseph Stalin.

The scientific community—and NASA in particular—has a vested interest in ignoring him, counters Hoagland, which he attributes, in part, to the "not invented here" syndrome: "After spending a billion dollars to search for signs of life on Mars and coming up empty-handed, they might be just a little embarrassed if a small group of amateurs found the evidence that eluded them." NASA, Hoagland charges, has also engaged in a systematic "pattern of abuse, ridicule, personal character assassination, distortion of data, and misrepresentation of the facts going back to 1976."

Hoagland's counterattack has become more than a fulltime job. Through Mars Mission, the 20,000-member, New Jersey–based public interest group he heads, he's lobbying to "open the files" on Cydonia and restore "honesty in government." He has touted his cause on TV, while making appearances at NASA and the United Nations. In his spare time he tries to raise funds for a private mission to the moon or Mars. His efforts have been nothing short of monumental. But the question remains: Is it all an elaborate "delusion," as he once asked in the book? Is he a latter-day Don Quixote tilting at Martian sphinxes? Or has he stumbled upon a phenomenon so fantastic the rest of the world cannot face up to it, despite a body of evidence he now calls "conclusive?"

—Steve Nadis

Omni: After so many years studying something the rest of the world either hasn't seen or doesn't believe, have you ever doubted your sanity?

Hoagland: I don't think we're crazy. Posing that question in the book was just a way of expressing my own incredulity, as well as sharing with the readers the feeling that this stuff is pretty amazing. I grew up on the *Twilight Zone*, Buck Rogers, Robert Heinlein, Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov. But I never imagined I'd find myself in the middle of a bona fide investigation of possible extraterrestrial artifacts. *Never. Ever.* So I thought it was important to remind the reader that I'm always asking myself: Can we prove this; can we test this; can we take this from the realm of science fiction to the realm of science fact?

Omni: You once confessed to always being intrigued by the anomalies. What's the fascination?

Hoagland: The weird stuff by definition is the stuff that doesn't fit, things not discussed. Exceptions. Aberrations. But in the history of science you find, first, there are semiperiodic revolutions where all of what was accepted wisdom is tossed out, and the weird stuff of the old becomes the accepted stuff of the new order. Second, the revolutions are never accomplished by those in the field—always by outsiders coming in with a fresh point of view. I've been attracted to the exceptions because they may lead to that big paradigm shift.

Omni: What gives outsiders the edge?

Hoagland: Lack of vested interest. People in the field have their careers and job security on the line, their house and car payments, maybe kids in college. They have reason not to want to overthrow a system that's rewarding them quite well. Outsiders don't have the reputation to protect, so they're more likely to pursue an aberrant idea. If you're in a field for 10, 20, 30 years, you develop a certain way of looking at things. You develop blinders. The thing can be right in front of you, staring you in the face, and you don't see it.

In the early Seventies, when the American Apollo program was winding

did see the things we have now rediscovered on the photographs, but didn't recognize what they were seeing. They were told they were going to a lifeless, uninhabited world and were never briefed about the possibility of seeing artificial structures.

Omni: How could they have been prepared otherwise?

Hoagland: A 1961 Brookings Institution report, commissioned by NASA, discussed this very contingency—that artifacts may be discovered by our space activities on the moon, Mars, or Venus. The study described two viable options for confirming extraterrestrial intelligence. One was a search for artifacts in the solar system; the other, a radio search for signals from extraterrestrials light-years away. The only E.T.s we ever expected to find were those who call us on the phone from Alpha Centauri. The notion of finding alien artifacts, somewhere, was considered politically unacceptable.

Omni: What, in your opinion, is behind this apparent bias?

Hoagland: The Brookings document discussed the possibility of finding artifacts and E.T. radio signals and considered the potential risk to our civilization. But what's the risk in artifacts? They communicate information that will change the status quo in science, technology, anthropology, and so on. New technology could lead to bigger, better things, including perhaps, weapons. Ultimately, Brookings was saying what I said a few moments ago: Unbridled knowledge in the hands of children can destroy a planet. So, the only safe course, or so Brookings recommended, would be to not tell the American people of such a discovery.

Omni: Since such a revelation could overthrow everything we know, how should it be presented to the public?

Hoagland: Look at what we've lived with for the last 40 years. Every morning, as kids got up and every night as they went to bed, they had to consider seriously that they wouldn't wake up the next morning, that somewhere, someone would push the wrong button and 50,000 nuclear warheads would turn this planet into a flaming pyre. Somehow we dealt with this awesome, frightening capability by openly discussing nuclear policy and proliferation. We now need an adult attitude toward extraterrestrial intelligence whereby we can rationally assess the possibility the human race is not alone.

Omni: How might it "change the history of human consciousness?"

Hoagland: The standard biological models say the human race is the result of trillions of random decisions made in Earth's isolated environment. If you roll the dice again, you'll come to the conclusion that, yes, you might have intelligence on another planet, but it couldn't possibly look like us. It's against that backdrop that we go to Mars. We take a set of pictures. And find a mile-long 1,500-foot-high effigy that looks like us. Since you can pretty effectively rule out that we did it, you're only left with a few possibilities: an indigenous Martian culture, an exterior culture from beyond the solar system, or a variant—another culture on another planet somewhere in the solar system.

The problem is, it looks like us. Standard evolutionary biology says it can't look like us. So it either means something about biology is totally whacko and we don't understand it at all, or there has been contact between somebody out there and somebody down here. In that case, we may be looking at some kind of calling card specifically designed to capture our attention. It says very simply that either the universe creates, over and over again, conscious sentient beings in our image or that somebody went to a lot of trouble to put a version of us down on the Martian surface to tell us about prior

and it falls apart because out of all those mesas we've looked at, only one resembles a human face. It also happens to be one that's part of a complex possessing stunning geometry. The extraordinary details we've found are as specific as finding New York City. What are the odds of finding a series of rectilinear structures laid out on a slender granite slab in the northeast region of the United States? You could say there's a tendency to see rectilinearity, which there is. Somebody built this rectilinear table, but they did it because that's what Euclidean geometry and the penchant for intelligence compels us to do—to order the universe in geometric patterns. And that is the key to decoding the features we're seeing on Mars.

Omni: What other evidence supports your view?

Hoagland: Near the face, we find a collection of pyramidlike objects that, in fact, morphologically, are pyramids. Hard, objective science demonstrates we're not dealing with "tricks of light and shadow," but with actual pyramidal and/or facelike objects. The point of contention now is their origin. Are they pyramidal and facelike because of natural processes—wind, water, erosion—or were they built?

One way to answer that question is by fractal analysis, objective computer criteria for discerning anomalies from natural background patterns. Mark Carlotto and Michael Stein used this technique and picked out the face as the most nonfractal; that is, the weirdest, most unnatural piece of Martian real estate in the several thousand square miles we looked at. Finally, we have my real contribution—the discovery of a geometric pattern linking several objects within a few miles of each other on this Martian plane. It's a recurring theme whose purpose seems to introduce us to a set of equations opening up a whole new window on physics. This geometric pattern then argues strongly that this complex was *designed.* There is meaning.

Omni: What is this meaning?

Hoagland: The geometry apparently was designed to communicate two fundamental constants of nature: pi, the ratio of the circumference of a circle to the diameter, and e, the base of natural logarithms. When you divide pi into e, you get the ratio, 0.865. That number shows up within and between these objects dozens of times. The odds of that happening by chance are astronomical. That geometry and mathematical code confirms predictions made by other researchers, particularly in astrophysics. Basically, it says spinning objects like stars or planets should show upwellings of energy at specific latitudes—19.5 degrees north or south, for example. Starting with the sun and moving all the way out to Neptune, this prediction is confirmed.

Omni: Can you say a bit more about this new physics?

Hoagland: This theory, based on "hyperdimensional" mathematics, appears to provide a fundamental connection between the four forces of nature. In our universe energy flows downhill. Heat goes from hot to cold, from higher to lower energy. So we considered that the math at Cydonia is telling us about higher dimensions. A spinning object such as a planet, connected to a higher and lower dimension, should exhibit a weird energy anomaly, an unusual manifestation from an invisible, higher dimension that shows up as an energy excess in our normal three-dimensional existence. We found examples of this in Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, all of which are radiating more energy than they're taking in from any observable source.

Omni: If a new mathematics and physics is being communicated, who is doing the communicating and why?

Hoagland: Suppose we're seeing on Mars a sophisticated, high-tech culture with access to technology based on a physics that is light-years beyond our current thinking. Then maybe, just maybe, this civilization might leave us, the "new kids on the block," clues, remnants, artifacts, to help us along. We have many examples on Earth of advanced cultures lending a helping hand to less advanced ones. We're losing the race between technology and population. Unless we introduce something radically new to grab everybody's attention and make them act like they're all part of the same species and stop killing other species on this planet—we're doomed.

Omni: You figure these folks came from outside the solar system?

Hoagland: Do you see any place in the solar system where a high-tech, indigenous civilization could have originated? I went through the list of candidates and eliminated every place. If somebody did something on Mars, they had to come from beyond the solar system. That was my position until a few days ago. Now, some new data has come to the fore that's incredibly speculative, but worth considering. There's a string of rubble between Mars and Jupiter called the asteroids. There are comets. The origin of asteroids and comets is ambiguous. The existing model holds that they are bits of debris left over from the formation of the solar system. Now a new model suggests asteroids and comets are actually remnants of a planet that exploded. If so, where did it come from, and why did it disappear?

One possibility is that it used to be inhabited by a high-tech civilization that developed a technology capable of destroying worlds. If this view is confirmed, it will lead to a new theory for where the builders of Mars' monuments came from. And a striking object lesson as well. It would be sobering indeed, to confirm high-tech predecessors in the solar system that blew themselves and their entire planet away because they were too ignorant to handle what they'd figured out.

Omni: How could you verify such an incredibly speculative proposition?

Hoagland: We could rendezvous with a chunk of an asteroid and see if there's something down there. We could look at other bodies in the solar system. If we're not dealing with a visit from outside the solar system, then odds are they put colonies not just on Mars, but on the moon and other places. There is a whole bunch of real estate out there to visit. We've been looking at the moon for two years. If someone built the monuments of Mars, maybe they would have appreciated the biological role of the moon upon Earth in the hyperdimensional model. But the moon has 15 million square miles, so where do you look? The math and geometry made a set of predictions, and when we started looking at the most obvious site—on space-based, NASA-based, and Earth-based photographs—we found a large crater containing an equilateral triangle, and a series of stunning clues and structures that are positively baffling, if they're not artificial.

Our evidence strongly suggests that at one time, there was some kind of large-scale habitation and construction on the lunar structure. Again, we seem to be looking at arcologies, enclosed environments. The great advantage, in contrast to the couple of photographs we have of Cydonia, is that we have millions of pictures of the moon, including almost two million photographs taken recently by the Pentagon's unmanned *Clementine* spacecraft.

Omni: Just how big are these lunar structures, anyway?

Hoagland: Very big—hundreds of miles across and tens of miles high. The moon is an easy place to build very large structures, with one-sixth Earth's gravity, no hurricanes, wind, thunderstorms, or earthquakes.

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Omni: Why didn't the Apollo astronauts see anything?

Hoagland: Well, when I was going through the Apollo transcripts, I found comments suggesting some astronauts

contact. Either scenario is awesome! If there is a universal template forcing intelligence to assume a human form, that's pretty amazing; the other possibility is that aliens have somehow meddled in the affairs of Earth.

Omni: How far do you suppose this "meddling" might have gone?

Hoagland: Perhaps the face on Mars is evidence someone has used genetic engineering to influence biological development in this environment for reasons that are currently unknown.

Omni: Why would someone do that? For kicks? Profit? Altruism?

Hoagland: Who knows? But suppose somebody who knew a lot more than we currently know arrived here, looked around, and said: "Whoops! They're not going to make it." And they did something to give us a better chance, something enabling us to pass on the favor some day. It may have been a little tinkering or a lot of tinkering. Suppose they also decided to leave us a memorial, so when we grew up and got to Mars we could thank them.

Omni: If true, that would cause a revolution in science and philosophy.

Hoagland: The history of science or philosophy can be viewed as a series of successive dethronements. A few thousand years ago, we—whichever people we were—considered ourselves the chosen of God. Things moved along and we found maybe we're not so chosen, but at least Earth was the center of the universe. Then along came Copernicus. For awhile, we clung to the idea the sun is still the center of the universe, until we found it's just an average star on the periphery of an average galaxy in a universe of billions and billions of galaxies. But at least we were still the only sentient beings in the entire cosmos. Maybe one reason people refuse to seriously consider the artifacts on Mars or the moon has to do with the "last dethronement." If we were to find evidence of structures in our own back yard, we'd no longer even be the first civilization in this solar system. It was once someone else's!

Omni: What do you see as your role in this "last dethronement?"

Hoagland: Now I'm just excited about having the chance to explore this prospect in my lifetime—just being part of this enormous revolution, being able to continue the search for extraterrestrial intelligence and to try to figure it all out. That is much more exciting than any place in history. The struggle will not be over when NASA finally, grudgingly acknowledges there are artifacts. That confirmation of our discovery is not the endpoint at all. It's just the beginning. It opens the door.

to a close, the environment had become the big rage at CBS, where I worked as an adviser to Walter Cronkite. I could have gone into toxic sludge and made a nice career of it, but I decided not to because I was as sure then as I am today that if the human race is going to have a destiny, it has to incorporate space in a big way. After many battles with the network, I decided to leave in 1972 and privately pursue space as a critical avenue for the future of the human species. At the time, of course, I didn't know that I'd find evidence that may be the lever to get society to realize how important space is. If we find evidence the human race is not alone, it's not going to be on this planet, but through the monuments of Mars and maybe the stuff on the moon, and that will have vindicated my faith that, yes, this is important.

Omni: How did you react when you first saw the face? Did it make a big impression?

Hoagland: Actually, it didn't. I had two opportunities to take it seriously and rejected it twice. I have great sympathy for people who say: "Oh my God! Come on, give me a break. This can't be real." Because I've been there. I was at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) in 1976 when Viking project scientist Gerry Soffen showed us this kind of quirky face and said: "Isn't it cute what tricks of light and shadow can do?" We all giggled and went about our business. It *had* to be a trick of lighting. Absolutely no way this thing could be real.

Then I went to Boulder in 1981 to attend the "Case for Mars" conference. One night I saw a group of people staring at a projection screen with a big blowup of the face on Mars. Except this face looked much more striking than the knobby, gnarly thing we'd been shown at JPL. Vince DiPietro and Greg Molenaar, engineers at Goddard Space Flight Center who'd gone through the original NASA data and done state-of-the-art image processing, gave me a copy of their monograph and I thought, "Nah, it's just a freak of nature." I took the monograph home, put it on a shelf, and went back to the stuff I was doing.

Omni: When did the idea finally take hold?

Hoagland: In 1983, DiPietro sent me a packet of stuff, photographic samples of their work on Mars. In the quietness of my den, it was just me and the photographs, and I thought, "Damn, this is peculiar!" The images were very crisp. They brought out details totally unavailable in the raw data. For the first time I considered: What if this isn't just a weird, eroded mountain? What if we're looking at an artifact? That simple thought set in motion a snowballing process that continues to this day.

Omni: Was it a question of timing, finding yourself in the right frame of mind?

Hoagland: Probably of having the data and peace and quiet to really think about it. I began to wonder what it'd mean for the human species to have absolute, factual knowledge that the race is not alone. Not as a distant radio signal from Alpha Centauri or somewhere out there, but as a set of existing ruins in our own back yard, accessible with late twentieth-century technology. Balancing the small probability of that against the overwhelming, almost incalculable importance, I realized that, damn it, this data required somebody doing something more.

Omni: Let's talk about your big breakthrough—the discovery of something you call the city on Mars.

Hoagland: Well, I was looking down at the Viking imagery, photographed from 1,000 miles overhead, studying this striking, bilaterally symmetric image of a humanoid face. Making the comparisons down a center line, it's about 90 to 95 percent symmetric. There's no easy way for geology to give you that kind of symmetry. Then I started wondering where one might go to get a good view of this sculpture. Examining the left-hand side of the photograph, I spotted a col-

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